

In the Claims:

1. (currently amended) A liquid distributor comprising

at least one channel for receiving a flow of liquid, said channel having a plurality of outlet apertures at longitudinally spaced apart points for an outflow of liquid from said channel in a plurality of streams;

~~an areal guide means~~ a sheet of metal weave extending below said channel to receive and laterally disperse at least some one of the streams of liquid flowing from said apertures of said channel, said ~~guide means~~ sheet of metal weave having a drip edge at a lower end for dispensing drops of the liquid received thereon along longitudinally spaced apart points; and

at least one distribution gutter disposed below said channel ~~with said guide means passing therethrough, said gutter having a pair of walls defining a downwardly tapering region and a gap to form a throttle means with said sheet of metal weave passing between said walls and through said gap~~ for distributing the liquid descending on said ~~guide means~~ sheet of metal weave by means of a hydrodynamic balance.

2. (original) A liquid distributor as set forth in claim 1 wherein said gutter is disposed in parallel to said channel.

3. (withdrawn) A liquid distributor as set forth in claim 1 wherein said gutter is disposed in perpendicular relation to said channel.

4. (canceled)

5. (currently amended) A liquid distributor as set forth in claim 1 ~~claim 4~~ wherein said

~~walls define a downwardly tapering region and a gap with said guide means disposed in and extending through said gap, said guide means~~ sheet of metal weave ~~is being~~ in contact with each said wall.

6. (currently amended) A liquid distributor as set forth in claim 1 ~~claim 5~~ wherein said sheet of metal weave ~~guide means~~ is a mesh having a fine mesh structure for distribution of a liquid with low viscosity.
7. (currently amended) A liquid distributor as set forth in claim 1 ~~claim 5~~ wherein said sheet of metal weave ~~guide means~~ is a mesh having a coarse mesh structure to define broad gaps between said mesh and said walls of said gutter for distribution of a liquid with high viscosity.
8. (currently amended) A liquid distributor as set forth in claim 1 ~~claim 5~~ wherein said walls of said distribution gutter are made of sheet metal.
9. (canceled)
10. (currently amended) A liquid distributor as set forth in claim 1 ~~claim 5~~ wherein said drip edge of said sheet of metal weave ~~guide means~~ has a plurality of recesses at spaced apart intervals.
- 11 -12. (canceled)
13. (original) A liquid distributor as set forth in claim 1 wherein said outlet apertures in said channel are spaced apart a maximum distance of 1 meter and are sized to deliver liquid at a rate of from 1 to 30 liters per hour.
- 14 -16. (canceled)

17. (currently amended) A column comprising

a structured packing ; and

a liquid distributor disposed above said packing for distributing liquid over and onto said packing, said distributor having a primary distribution stage including a plurality of channels for receiving liquid, each said channel having a plurality of outlet apertures at longitudinally spaced apart points for an outflow of liquid from said channel in a plurality of streams; a plurality of areal sheets of metal weave, each said sheet defining a guide means, each said guide means extending below a respective one of said channels to receive and laterally disperse at least one of the streams of liquid flowing from said apertures of said channel, each said guide means having a drip edge at a lower end for dispensing drops of the liquid received thereon along longitudinally spaced apart points onto said packing; and a plurality of distribution gutters, each said distribution gutter being disposed below at least one of said channels with a respective one of said guide means passing therethrough, each said distribution gutter having a pair of walls defining a downwardly tapering region and a gap to form a throttle means with a respective one of said guide means passing between said walls and through said gap for distributing the liquid descending on said guide means by means of a hydrodynamic balance.

18. (original) A column as set forth in claim 17 wherein each said gutter is disposed in parallel to and below a respective one said channels.

19. (canceled)

20. (currently amended) A column as set forth in claim 17 wherein each said gutter

~~includes a pair of walls defining said throttle means and wherein said walls define~~
~~a downwardly tapering region and a gap with a respective said guide means~~
~~disposed in and extending through said gap, said respective guide means is~~
~~being in contact with each said wall of a respective distribution gutter.~~

21. (new) A liquid distributor as set forth in claim 1 further comprising a guide means extending between said channel and said distribution gutter for directing said streams of liquid from said channel towards said gutter.

22. (new) A liquid distributor as set forth in claim 21 wherein said guide means is an extension of one of said walls of said gutter.

23. (new) A liquid distributor as set forth in claim 1 wherein at least one of said outlet apertures in said channel is a tubular guide organ for directing liquid in a helical path onto said sheet of metal weave.

24. (new) A liquid distributor as set forth in claim 1 wherein said drip edge of said sheet of metal weave is subdivided into narrow segments and alternating gusset-shaped cut-outs

25. (new) A column as set forth in claim 17 wherein each said gutter is disposed in perpendicular relation to a plurality said channels.

26. (new) A liquid distributor comprising

at least one channel for receiving a flow of liquid, said channel having a plurality of outlet apertures at longitudinally spaced apart points for an outflow of liquid from said channel in a plurality of streams;

an areal metal mesh guide means extending below said channel to receive and laterally disperse at least one of the streams of liquid flowing from

said apertures of said channel, said guide means having a drip edge at a lower end for dispensing drops of the liquid received thereon along longitudinally spaced apart points; and

at least one distribution gutter disposed below said channel with said guide means passing therethrough, said gutter having a pair of walls defining a throttle means for distributing the liquid descending on said guide means by means of a hydrodynamic balance, said walls defining a downwardly tapering region and a gap with said guide means disposed in and extending through said gap, said guide means being in contact with each said wall.